North Pole 4-H leader wins regional award

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Fairbanks, Alaska—For the second year in a row, a Fairbanks-area 4-H leader has been named the top volunteer for the Western region of 4-H.

Nancy Graff, leader of the North Pole Ptarmigan 4-H Club, recently received the Western Region 4-H Salute to Excellence Volunteer of the Year Award, which recognizes the top 4-H volunteer with less than 10 years of service.

Local 4-H leader Steve Rice is one of several people who nominated Graff for the award.

“Nancy is the spirit and energy of the Tanana 4-H District. No leader compares to her bubbly personality and high tempo,” he wrote in his nomination. “You can spot where Nancy is in the crowd because it will be the nucleus where everything is teeming with life.”

Graff became involved in 4-H when her older daughter, Hannah, was 5. She was an assistant leader for several years and eventually took on leadership of the North Pole Ptarmigans club as well as two after-school clubs at North Pole Elementary and North Pole Middle School. Hannah is now 17.

The North Pole Ptarmigans raise a variety of animals for the fair, garden and work on leadership skills. A common thread for all of Graff’s clubs is community service. Members bake cookies for the North Pole Fire Department, pick up trash and host petting zoos. The Ptarmigan club has brought rabbits, guinea pigs and sometimes goats that wear Depends to visit Pioneers Home residents.

“The people there just love it,” she said “I think that’s a good connection for the kids.”

Graff is also involved with the local and state leadership of 4-H, hosts animal clinics and is helping to plan the 2016 Western Region 4-H conference in Fairbanks.

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